

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TRINIDAD PLANNING
COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 01, 2019**

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL (5:00 pm)

Commissioners Present: Graves, Stockness, Kelly, Johnson
Commissioner Absent: Lake
City Planner Staff: Parker
City Staff: Zetter

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion (Johnson/Stockness) to approve the agenda as submitted. Passed unanimously (4-0)

III. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

No items from the floor.

IV. AGENDA ITEMS

- a. General Plan Update: Discussion of status and next steps. Introduction and review of a draft Water Demand Assessment and discussion of water service policies and priorities.

Staff report

Parker provided background information regarding the City's water service policies. She stated that initially there was never a perceived need to change the service area or sphere of influence as part of the general plan update, but multiple situations (i.e. drought and limited water supply) have caused the City to reevaluate this issue. Parker explained that the City needs to determine if the City wants to change the boundaries of the service area and / or prioritize certain areas for possible annexation. Parker confirmed that LAFCo is the agency that makes the final determine on out of area service requests (e.g. water connections outside City limits), as well as jurisdictional boundaries for cities and including annexations, etc. She explained that LAFCo policies changed around 2000, resulting in the discontinuation of the City providing water connections outside of the City limits, but those policies have since been relaxed somewhat. An exception was made for CAL FIRE back in 2009. Parker stated that there are multiple pieces to the water puzzle, but a goal of the City is to develop more specific policies or regulations for responding to future water service requests.

Parker confirmed that with the water plant production memo prepared by GHD, and the water demand assessment she has provided, the big remaining question now is the

flow capacity of Luffenholtz Creek. She noted that while there is some potential to make improvements to the plant to increase production, the ultimate limiting factor is likely low flows on the creek. She referenced the Draft Water Demand Assessment included in the packet, stating it provides projections for build-out within the City limits and within the City's service area. She advised that the report includes conservative estimates that likely overestimate demand in order to provide a cushion. However, the report does not provide a timeframe, because buildout is likely decades into the future.

Parker confirmed that there is more developmental potential in the City than one would expect. She advised that to determine this she used a parcel by parcel assessment within City limits. She also included potential for accessory dwelling units. She confirmed that the water demand assessment examined zoning potential of both residential and commercial parcels in the service area. Parker further discussed the City's current infrastructure; advising that there is currently some water loss in the system, which GHD will be further investigating. GHD will also be assessing low flows on Luffenholtz Creek.

Commissioner Questions/Comments

Commissioner Graves asked about water losses and the accuracy of the tests at the water plant. Parker advised conducting tests at the water treatment plant for a longer period of time would be beneficial, but an answer would better be provided by the City Engineer GHD. She further stated that in regards to losses, those can be difficult to trace, and 10% to 20% is fairly normal. GHD will be examining the difference in production and what is metered in total to see where losses may be occurring.

Commissioner Stockness requested that creeks be added to the service area map and asked for clarification on maps provided. Commissioner Kelly opined that comparison of Trinidad's per capita water use to other communities would be beneficial.

Parker provided a brief explanation of the study planned for Luffenholtz Creek. She stated that one of the main components of the flow study will be an emphasis on low-flows and risks to the City's water supply from droughts and climate change. Parker further stated a model of the Trinidad's water system will be developed to determine storage capacity and how changes to the system would impact other parts of the system, such as change in pressure, etc. GHD will also be looking at alternative sources of water supply. At some point, SHN will develop an inventory of water rights in Luffenholtz Creek, so that the City can better enforce its right as needed. Furthermore, policies and procedures for responding to water service requests are being discussed between the Planner, Engineer and the City Manager.

Commissioner Johnson advised that it is unclear how the City integrates their policies with LAFCo policies that are created for service areas that are outside of City limits. He stated there needs to be a cohesive set of policies we can all agree on.

Stockness questioned whether the CCC has to approve connections/annexations. Parker advised that the CCC must approve annexations, because new areas and new zoning would be added to the City's LCP. But the CCC would not need to approve individual service connections. However, Parker explained the City needs to determine who to service first. She clarified there could be individual approvals for connection, which do not require annexation at the time of connection. While further stating, some individuals may not want to be annexed. However, Parker advised that annexation of commercial areas would be financially beneficial for the City but annexing residential areas can have benefits too.

Commissioner Graves questioned whether the City has reviewed water usage of Short Term Rentals in City limits. Parker responded that STRs were not reviewed as part of this current water demand assessment, but that the City has studied that in the past. She notes that, on average STRs use a little more water than a long-term residence, but that the highest residential water users are not STRs.

Commissioner Kelly requested a comparison of water usage with other cities in the area, such as Arcata and Eureka, to compare per capita use, as per capita Trinidad citizens appear to be frugal. Kelly advised that she would like to know how usage is being tracked and forecasted down the road, and that per capita water use could be used to predict future water use based on population growth. Parker advised that a comparison with surrounding cities could be difficult, as the service area is not a census tract, so the population is unknown; the only option may be to examine trends over time and parcel-by-parcel water use. Parker also notes that parcel size and landscaping play a large role in water use patterns.

Johnson questioned ADUs and their impact on bluff saturation/stability. Johnson further questioned if the spreadsheet can be used to perform the "what if" scenarios. Johnson opined it would be beneficial to both the Commission and public if the City Engineer/Planner provided a tutorial at the meeting, as the assumptions made are important for the future of the City. Parker responded that the City's groundwater model has indicated that there are certain areas of the City where water infiltration is not a limiting factor, but that there is a limit to how much water can be infiltrated in other areas. She also stated that it would be fairly easy to make changes to the assumptions in the spreadsheet and review how that changes the water demand real-time.

Commissioners Johnson and Graves questioned tables and figures provided. Parker provided explanations and clarifications, many being geared toward the Rancheria's water usage. Parker confirmed the Rancheria will be included in the total amount of usage for out of service areas, and confirmed that she has performed a comparison of water usage of the Rancheria versus other service area properties. Parker clarified that

there are multiple uses at some of the Rancheria properties. Graves requested the total amount of water usage for the Rancheria. Johnson requested a map of the City and outside City limits be provided on the projector at the next meeting.

Public Comment

D. Grover (Trinidad Resident and City Council member) advised that the Council approved the scope of services for GHD to perform the five tasks listed above, so many of the questions being asked will be answered. Grover also read from the General Plan.

S. Madrone (Greater Trinidad Area Resident and County Supervisor) stated that the basis for previous low flow estimates for Luffenholtz was in the summer of 1977, but it wasn't a hundred-year drought. Madrone stated it was unclear why the Council voted to spend a substantial amount of money from the water reserve fund on a low-flow study, as there was a recent study of Luffenholtz Creek related to the Moss subdivision. Madrone, however, opined that the alternative water study is important. He mentioned the spring concept that he brought forward to the City, which would allow the City to reduce its chemical usage and limit staff time. He also brings up rainwater catchment.

E. Weinreb (Greater Trinidad Area Resident) stated the documents library on the City's website is confusing and the documents were hard to find.

D. Hankin (President of the Westhaven CSD Board) stated Westhaven's water usage peak is generally in August. Hankin stated that a tiered rate system, as recommended in the report is illegal. He advised there is a lot of water loss within the Trinidad system.

S. Laos (Trinidad Rancheria) clarified that there are some parcels that have two homes on the Rancheria, but two homes on one meter is not allowed. She advised that if requested, she can obtain more information and provide it to the City Planner.

D. Cox (Trinidad Resident) questioned the allowance and assessment of ADUs in the report. She stated that ADUs are impacting the area, and if they are allowed, there will be too many people.

V. Sackville (Trinidad Resident) questioned what the commercial verses residential usage is. She stated commercial locations are using more water.

Commissioner Discussion

In response to data requests, Parker advised that not all of the water account information is available to the public, due to privacy laws. In response to D. Hankin, Parker advised that according to the City Engineer, multiple cities use tiered water systems.

Johnson questioned what is done for fire suppression. Parker confirmed the City does have a few storage tanks and GHD is conducting studies to determine how much the City has for fire flow capacity. Parker clarified it is possible that the City does not meet the current standards.

Stockness discussed the benefit of rain catchment for future water service and build out demand. Commissioner Kelly questioned if there are state grant programs.

Public Comment

S. Madrone (Greater Trinidad Area Resident) stated there is grant funding for rain catchment, especially because it incentivizes less usage. He also suggests that the City look into the possibility of constructing storage ponds in the upper Luffenholtz Creek watershed.

S. Laos (Trinidad Rancheria) stated she and her sister are advocating to the Rancheria for rain catchment systems.

Commissioner Discussion

The Commissioners did not have additional comments and questions on the water demand assessment, so they moved on to a general discussion of the general plan update, including the status and next steps. Parker advised that she wants to revisit the introduction section and vision statement, which Commissioner Kelly has done some work on. She discussed that previously the drafts were from the early 2000s and then 2012. She recommended not reviewing the General Plan page by page, because that has already been done, but instead update information as needed and get the elements back to the City Council. Parker further stated that she wants to incorporate the CCC's comments, which she expects soon. Upon final review, each element will be provided to the Council for their review.

Commissioner Graves requested a copy of what has been updated so far. Parker advised she will get as much as she can for the next agenda. Parker confirmed the General Plan and the implementing ordinances must be submitted to the CCC at the same time. Graves stated Parker's institutional knowledge helps the City immensely.

V. STAFF REPORT

Graves made a note to again reach out to Mayor Ladwig to discuss a liaison. Johnson commented that there is no reason why the Planning Commission and City Council cannot have a joint meeting.

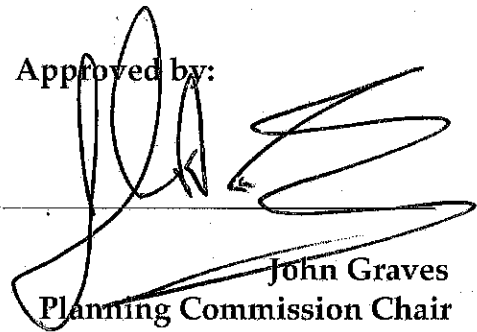
VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting has been adjourned at 6:42 pm. Next meeting is July 17, 2019.

Submitted by:

Angela Zetter
Administrative Assistant

Approved by:



John Graves
Planning Commission Chair